CHINESE ART MOTIVES INTERPRETED

WINIFRED REED TREADWELL

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BOMBAY BRANCH

OF THE

Royal Asiatic Society.

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Plate I

Vase with Symbols

Collection of G. W. Salting, Esq.

CHINESE ART MOTIVES

INTERPRETED

BY

WINIFRED REED TREDWELL

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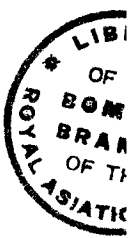
WITH 23 ILLUSTRATIONS



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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

To

THE DEAR TWIN GENII OF

MIRTH AND HARMONY!

FOREWORD

IT is the aim of this tiny bubble-book to reflect a glint of the life that underlies Chinese art, which draws many of its motives from the intimate stories of that great country.

It was through a two years' residence in the Far East and a careful study of the best European collections of Oriental art that I became interested in this branch of the subject, and it is hoped that this little hand-book may supply material which, at present, may be obtained only by wading through technical descriptions of art collections in various parts of the world. I have boldly taken my little feather broom to the dust of ages, beneath which are hiding stories of ourselves and our times—and selves and times yet to come—though the names, geography, and

dates be different. Lest anybody should accuse me of having invented these ancient tales, I have appended a list of books, dealing with special phases of Chinese art or history, to which I gratefully acknowledge indebtedness.

My illustrations come from various sources. The statuettes of Laotsze and Kuan-yin belong to the interesting collection of R. H. Benson, Esq., of Killilan Lodge, Kyle of Loch Alsh, and by his courtesy have been especially photographed for this book. Special photographs have also been made in the case of the statuettes of Ho Shang and the Paragon of Filial Piety, which are a part of Sir A. W. Franks's collection in the British Museum, and in the case of the Salting vase and the porcelain plaque, shown in the frontispiece and on pages 32 and 90, which come from that wonder-house, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

The "Post-Impressionist" drawings, which dot this work, have been made from choice pieces of pottery, brocades, embroidery, lacquer, carvings, etc., in public and private collections in Europe and America. Only the author is to blame.

There is no more delightful introduction to the soul of China than her art, into which has been woven, to the perfection of beauty, much that is frankly humorous, whimsical, and profound. The elementary language of this art is simple enough—a handful of symbols—and here you are!

W. R. T.

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CHINESE ART MOTIVES

I

The Story on Your Chinese Vase

"Tzu Kung said: 'I am anxious to avoid doing to others that which I would not have them do to me!' The Master said: 'Tzu, you have not got as far as that!' "—ANALECTS.

CHAPTER I

THE STORY ON YOUR CHINESE VASE

WHEN China sends a mandarin coat, a square of brocade, a bit of crockery or carving, out of the East, it goes as a part of her message to the world. On each piece are reminders of ancient stories, which are told over and over again in every branch of Chinese art and handicraft. These lie hidden from the careless eye behind the Oriental veil of symbolism. With the Chinese, art is narrative, and he who is willing to stop and pull aside this filmy curtain of the East will find himself at a most enticing gate, which leads into a new and yet a very old world, filled with people of flesh and blood, a history as fascinating as it

is long, and showing some of the soundest philosophy the world has ever known. The Chinese artist prides himself on the personal details he can put into a picture, that is, the history of his subject in art, literature, official service, or social life.

Owing to the sturdy way in which bronzes put up with a wretched climate for an endless length of time—for all the world like the English people—the early Chinese have been able to tell us a part of their own experience. Their first bronze messages deal chiefly with the weather, the celestial topic which has been used more than any other to open up cherished friendships. One is sorry to know that there were plenty of clouds (Pl. 4.) in those days, and the thunder so emphatic that they put it into the pattern known to our world as the Trojan Key. This famous design is supposed to have arisen independently in Greece and China.

Moreover they tell us that there existed even in those times an annoying land-ogre called the Tao-t'ieh, whose face looks ever so much like the incarnated ancestor of a mortgage! His eyes, and sometimes his nose, and hungry mouth—done in relief on antique wine vessels—are to be seen today by those possessed of sufficient imagination.

As is now well-known, China has long ago discovered everything. This fact was not realized by Rosel von Rosenhof, who confidently thought that he had found the first amœba in 1755. Little did he dream that Fu Hsi—mythically styled the first Chinaman—had stolen the glory of its counterpart by a little margin of more than 3000 years! The find was given to the world in a perfectly modern way, with unusually clever advertisement. Fu Hsi declared that, while thinking over a means of making clear

the knotty problem of the universe, a dragon-horse skimmed over the water towards him. It was a horrible moment for Fu Hsi, until he noticed that the dragon-horse bore on its back some mystic symbols, subsequently used in all forms of Chinese art, which contained in their few lines the world and all that in it is, beginning with the amœba.

The first symbol, and the one which von Rosenhof would have most deeply resented had he been among those present, was called the Tae-Keih (Pl. 4). This was a circle divided by a curved line into two nucleated cells. One of these stood for the female principle (*yin*)—such as the earth, the moon, etc.—and was generated by the "Rest" of the Tae-Keih or Great All. The other cell denoted the male principle (*yang*)—such as the heaven sun, etc.—and was generated by the "Motion" of the Great All.

One of the classics (*Yih King*), edited by Confucius, explains that the health, happiness, and peace of individuals, nations, and the universe, depend on the balance maintained between these two elements. Conversely, great lack of balance between them is the source of ill-health, war, and chaos.

From the Tae-Keih sprang other symbols made up of a complete or masculine line and a broken or feminine line, which gave rise to a lineal representation of the whole universe, known as the Eight Mystic Trigrams (Pl. 2). These are especially interesting in this age of equal suffrage as revealing the place in nature given to the "broken reed" by the ancestors of the newest Republic:

Symbol for the sidereal globe, in other words heaven. (Completely male.)

Mist, steam, the vaporous in nature. (Female in the ascendant.)

Fire, and its attributes, heat and light.

Thunder—the big noise. (Why two-thirds female?)

Wind. (Note the two male lines.)

Fluid element.

Mountains. (Largely female.)

Earth. (The extreme of heaven. Completely female.)

To begin with the heavens in general, and that ultra-male, the sun, in particular, it is necessary to state that early Chinese minds were so busied about it, that more recent artists have found a set

Plate 2

Snuff Bottle with Eight Mystic Trigrams

Plate 3

Phœnix and Dragon Embroidered

of ready-made, sun-dried conventions waiting for them. Those things in art which have to do with the sun, such as altars and vase-shapes, must be round or of unequal divisions. Its proper colour symbol is red; and *sang-de-bœuf*—that pottery, bathed in a gorgeous stream of sacrificial blood—probably came into existence, according to Bushell, in response to the demand for a rich and appropriate colour. The sun itself is the symbol of Light victorious over Darkness, and may be represented by a circle or red ball, on which may be sketched the outline of the three-footed red crow. Sometimes the ball is surrounded by clouds or it sinks behind the mountains (Pl. 4) which, truth to tell, often look less like mountains than like a table napkin which has been discarded by an impetuous diner. Constellations (Pl. 4) are frequently compressed into the sky-view of a vase or

wall-painting, with the stars carefully tied together by a little string, so that none of them may be mistaken for an accident. These usually indicate the presence on the picture of some mythical personage who is connected by tradition with that especial group of stars.

One of the busiest animals in the world is the Chinese dragon (Pl. 3) who, when he is not half-way between heaven and earth, spitting flames or fighting tigers, is kept on the jump, guarding—amongst other things—vases, tea-table covers, tea-napkins, household furniture, and mandarin coats! Though at times he may appear a bit frivolous, he is in reality the symbol of a profound conception of nature, well worthy of its intellectual foster parents. The dragon holds within himself the part of the universe which is gloriously free and unrestrained, in opposition to that miserable fraction which,

like ourselves, is imprisoned in matter. The tiger represents this jailed portion, and no doubt the reason the dragon is always attacking her is because he feels so perfectly safe! Dragons in art may be looked on as a composite photograph of the legal profession, for it is their special business to guard the jewel of the law (Pl. 4). This last item is a rare and valuable disk on which the dragon tries to get his claws. His forensic ability is represented by flames (Pl. 4) which sometimes spring from his mouth with great volume and intensity. Sometimes it is only steam.

If a really classic dragon were to appear unannounced in our midst, he would attract a good deal of attention, for he would have a camel's head, deer's horns, rabbit's eyes, cow's ears, snake's neck, frog's belly, carp's scales, hawk's claws, tiger's palm—and whiskers! One can

imagine the zoölogists and newspaper reporters that would follow in his wake! In event of this circumstance a challenge is hereby issued to them all—even to the reporters, although this would be rash in the U. S. A.—to guess whether he was:

A sky-dragon—guardian of the heavens, who keeps them from caving in;

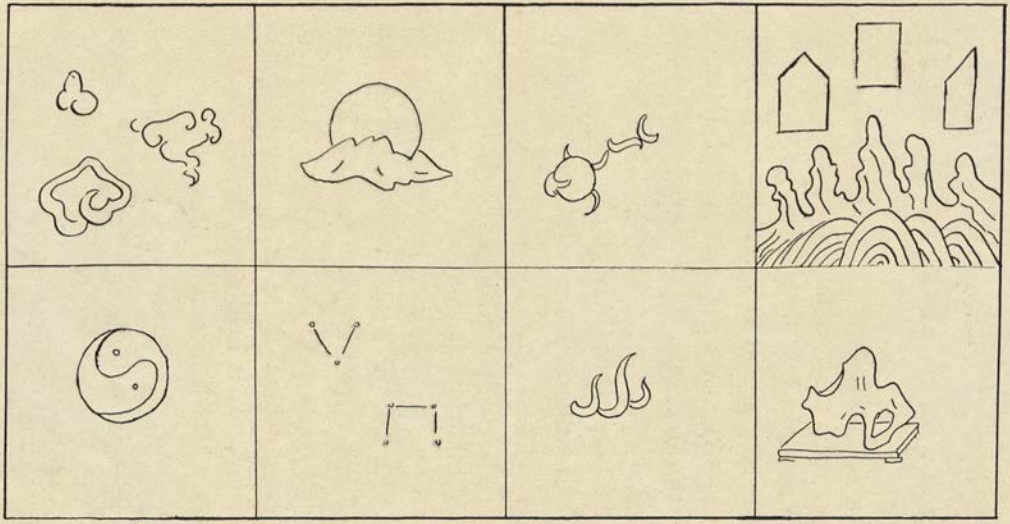
An earth-dragon—tracer of the course of rivers;

A spiritual dragon—ruler of the wind and rain-clouds;

A dragon of hidden treasures.

The Dragon Feast, which is often the subject of pictures, is a familiar sight in many parts of China, as well as in foreign towns, where there is a large Chinese colony. It is held annually on the fifth day of the fifth moon in commemoration of the death of an eminent statesman, Chu Yuan, who was adviser to Prince Hwai (314 B.C.). Through no fault of

Plate 4



Nature Motives

Clouds

Tai keih =

Primordial

Sun [Jih]

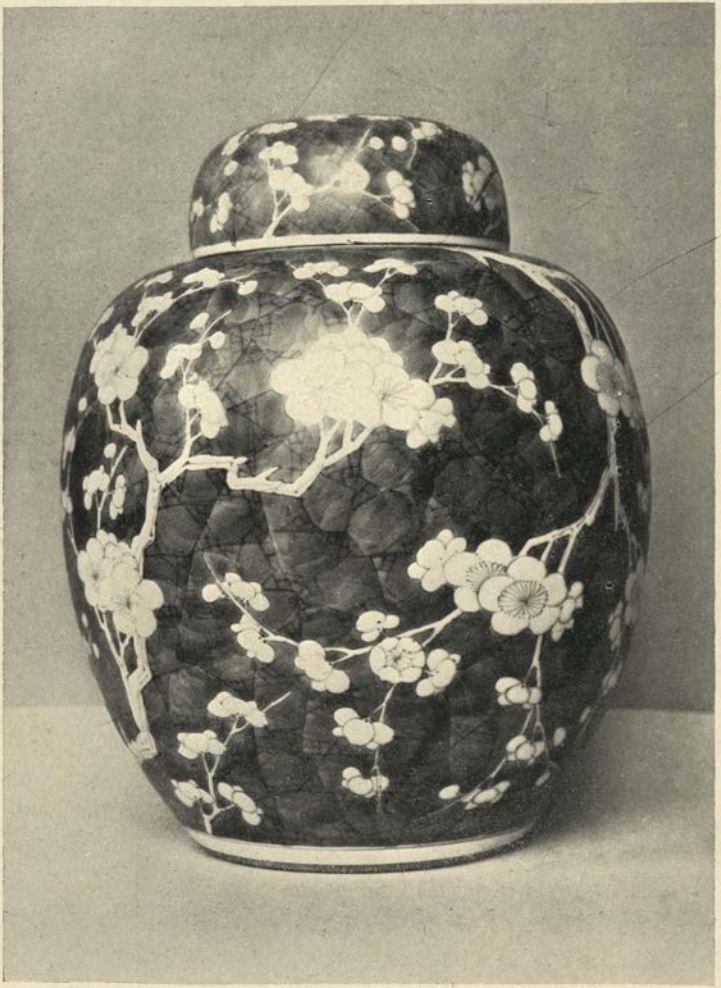
Constellation [Hsing chen]

Flaming jewel

Flame [Huo]

Tablets imperial and noble; Water

Rockery



Blue and White Ginger Jar with Prunus Blossoms

his own, the adviser fell into disgrace, and, in the pride of his hitherto honourable name, found life more than he could bear. After unburdening his heart to a sympathetic fisherman, he threw himself into the river Mi-lo, from which his body was never recovered. For two thousand years dragon parades have been held on land and water to show the reverence of the people for the virtues of the good Chu Yuan.

Since the reign of Kao Ts'ou (Han Dynasty 206 B.C.) the five-clawed dragon has been the Emperor's emblem. It was also allowed for the use of the Emperor's sons and princes of the first and second rank. Princes of the third and fourth rank had to be content with one claw less on their emblem, while princes of the fifth rank and mandarins were allowed to have all five claws provided they were attached to the body of a serpent. In the

same way a distinction was made between the honorific tablets of the Emperor and his powerful vassals. Those of the Emperor (Pl. 4) were oblong with square corners. Those of his subjects were of the same general shape but with one or both of the upper corners "clipped" as a symbol of their submission to imperial authority. Tablets in other forms, graven with complimentary inscriptions, were given in recognition of public service and were used as a cherished decoration in receiving rooms.

Ancient stories link together the dragon and the carp. Both in China and Japan the carp is admired because it is ambitious enough to swim against the current. It has, therefore, become the emblem of perseverance, and the legend is that when the carp has passed the falls at the Dragon Gate of the Yellow River, it finds its reward by being changed into a dragon.

Its aspiring and inspiring leap to glory is exhibited—all unbeknownst to the owner in most instances—on many a mantelpiece and dining-room table of the western world.

The phœnix (Pl. 3) is the emblem of the Empress. It is not a sensational hybrid like the dragon, and confines itself to the family traits of the feathered tribe, such as "swallow's beak, pheasant's head, and long streaming tail." Its five colours symbolize the five cardinal virtues.

There is a further colour symbolism, especially applicable to embroidery, to indicate the points of the compass. The east side, according to classic rule, should be the blue side—and so it is even in London and New York; the west—white; the north—black; and the south—red. This scheme extends even to animals in such a way that a startled collector might

easily find the Black Serpent and Tortoise of the North, the Red Bird of the South, the Blue Dragon of the East, and the White Tiger of the West loitering about the premises. Bluish black is the colour indicated for the side of the sky. This is also true in London. Furthermore, there is an arrangement for clouds —though scarcely in the Whistlerian sense. Green clouds denote a plague of insects; red—calamity or warfare; black —floods; and yellow prosperity. The five elements, wood, fire, water, earth and metals are represented respectively by green, red, black, yellow, and white. White is also the emblem of mourning. The royal colours are: Brown for the Sung Dynasty (960–1127 A.D.); green for the Ming (1368–1644 A.D.); and a special yellow for the Ts'ing (1644–1911 A.D.) It has broken the heart and purse of many a collector of Chinese art to find out only

too late, that he has purchased the wrong shade.

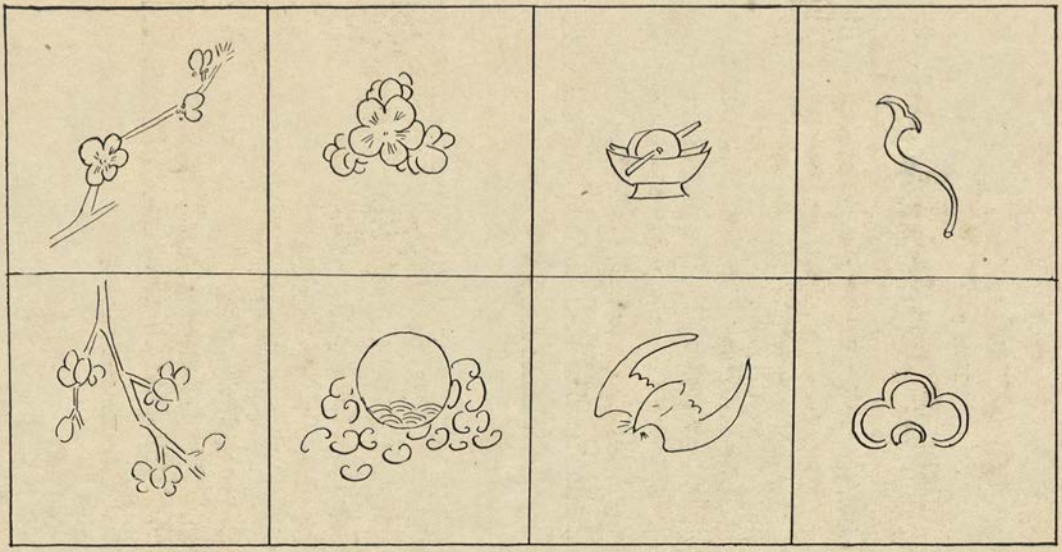
We have now gradually worked our way down to the bottom of the trigrammatic ladder, where that unfortunate infra-female—the Earth—is waiting as usual. There is not much to say about her except that altars, vase-forms, and other symbols in her honour should be square or of even divisions. Her colour, even in those days of her youth, was decreed to be a most ungallant yellow, and, except in the form of mountains and rockeries (Pl. 4), she does not seem to play a very large part. Even when she does appear she would never recognize herself after having gone through the hands of an artistic Chinese beauty doctor.

Twelve of her loveliest children, together with a dozen of her brutish step-relatives, are used to symbolize the months of the year:

January	prunus	tiger
February	peach blossom	rabbit
March	tree-peony	dragon
April	double cherry blossom	serpent
May	magnolia	horse
June	pomegranate	hare
July	lotus	monkey
August	pear	fowl
September	mallow	dog
October	chrysanthemum	wild boar
November	gardenia	rat
December	poppy	bullock

Among the blossoms the following have been selected for the special honour of representing the four seasons: the tree-peony for spring, the lotus for summer, the chrysanthemum for autumn, and the prunus for winter.

The prunus or plum blossom frequently appears on the ginger jars (Pl. 5) of blue and white porcelain, which were often used for gifts of tea at the New Year. The background with its angular lines is meant to resemble crackling ice, and



Flower Motives

Climbing prunus

Cluster prunus

Mortar and pestle

Jui sceptre

Hanging prunus

Moon [Yueh]

Bat

Head of jui sceptre

Plate 7

Hundred Antiques

Hundred Antiques

the success of the vase depends greatly upon the skill with which the decorator has suggested a transparent coating of ice beneath which lies an unfathomable depth of blue. The prunus design itself—often referred to as the hawthorn (Pl. 6)—is of three types: climbing prunus (Pl. 6); hanging prunus (Pl. 6); and cluster prunus (Pl. 6) Sometimes the two or three varieties are found on the same vase.

There is a beautiful legend connected with the plum-tree which sometimes occurs in art. A young man, who had started on a pilgrimage to Mount Lo-Fou, stopped to rest at the edge of a pine forest. Out of the nowhere a beautiful woman approached to meet him, bearing about her person the delicate fragrance of the plum blossom. After conversing with her for some time he fell asleep and on awakening found himself covered with white petals which were falling like

scented flakes of snow from a plum-tree over his head.

The earth's favourite satellite, the moon (Pl. 6), is depicted as a disk, often among clouds, with waves covering half its base in recognition of its influence over the tides. Its most prominent citizen is the miserable Wu Kung, whose punishment as a sorcerer consists in eternally hacking away at a cinnamon-tree, which gently but firmly refuses to be cut down.

The frog is an emblem of the moon and was once a woman who fled to that chilly disk after having robbed her husband of the elixir of immortality, given him by the Taoist goddess Hsi Wang Mu. The hare also lives in the moon, though as a mark of honour, because once upon a time it dashed on to a pyre and offered itself up as a religious sacrifice. No doubt for want of social gaiety it spends its time with mortar and pestle (Pl. 6), grind-

ing the famous patent elixirs, guaranteed to produce immortality, which have been on sale at street-corner pharmacies ever since the world began.

The beautiful shade of blue-grey-pink known as *clair de lune*, which runs over rare examples of ancient pottery like a luscious sugar frosting, is appropriate for use in the Temple of the Moon.

The foregoing symbols of royalty, heaven and earth, appear on pottery, embroidery, and lacquer astonishingly often. There may be mentioned also the Twelve Ornaments, properly used in embroidery for sacrificial robes, but sometimes found on garments worn by those next to one at the theatre. According to Sir A. W. Franks they are:

1. Sun, in a bank of clouds, with the three-legged bird inside the disk;
2. Moon, containing hare with mortar and pestle;

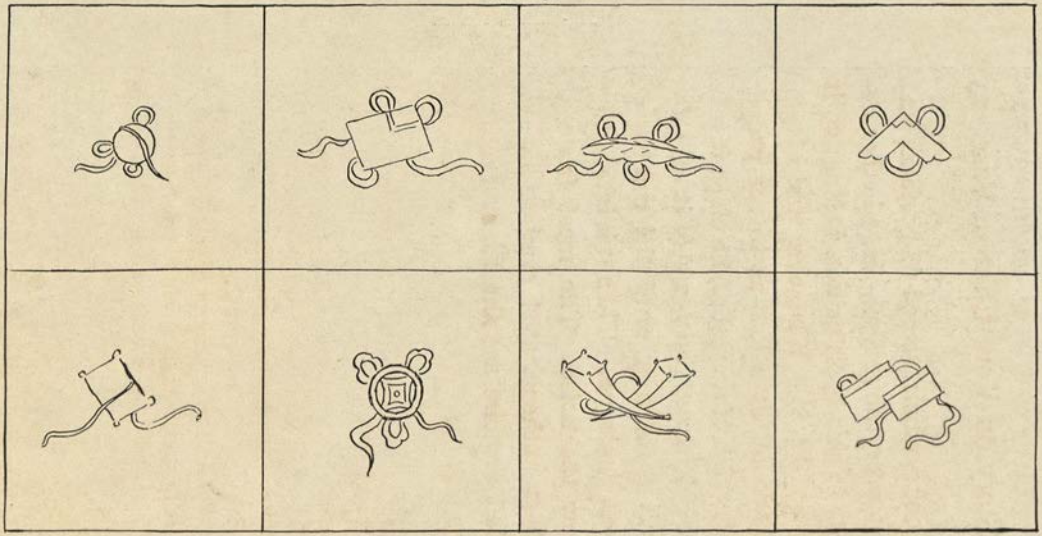
3. Star constellation of stars connected by straight lines;
4. Mountains, worshipped in China from ancient times;
5. Dragons, two scaly ones, each five-clawed;
6. Flowery fowls, two variegated pheasants;
7. Temple vessels, used in ancestral worship;
8. Aquatic grass in sprays;
9. Fire in flaming scrolls;
10. Millet grains grouped in medallions;
11. Fu = axe or weapon of warrior;
12. Fu = symbol of distinction or happiness.

The Chinese syllable "Fu" not only means axe and happiness, but "bat" as well. Therefore bats (Pl. 6) are used interchangeably with it—an embroidered or painted pun. Five bats in the same design signify the five blessings—goodness, riches, offspring, long life, and a happy death.

The Hundred Antiques is an elastic

Plate 8

Hundred Antiques



Eight Precious Things

Jewel of the law [CHIN]

Lozenge [FANG CHANG]

Lozenge

Coin [Kwei]

Artemisia leaf [Ai yeh]

Horn cups [Chüeh]

Stone gong [King]

Pair of books [Shu]

group of symbols, sacred or profane; and almost everything symbolic, whether described in this book or not, belongs to it (Pl. 7 and Pl. 8). Whenever a sinologue is a little bit at a loss as to the proper classification of a symbol, he claps it into the Hundred Antiques, where it subsides without a murmur until the coming of the next sinologue. Then it is interesting to hear the noise. The most frequent and best authenticated symbols in this crowded armoire are the Eight Precious Things (Pl. 9):

1. Pearl, said to be used as a charm against fire and flood.
2. Lozenge, sometimes hollow supposed to be an obsolete musical instrument.
3. Lozenge, possibly an ancient metal mirror.
4. Coin, emblem of wealth.
5. Artemisia leaf, emblem of good fortune.
6. Pair of horn cups. Rhinoceros horn cups were said to sweat when filled with poisonous substances.

7. Jade gong, rung by those desiring justice.
8. Two books. Probably an emblem of learning or wisdom.

The ribbons or fillets which bind these symbols originally suggested the sacred nature of the objects so entwined. It seems probable that later artists employed them for decorative purposes only, with the idea of filling up space in the easiest way.

II

Taoist Subjects in Art

"A man may know the world without leaving the shelter of his roof; through his own windows he may see the Supreme Tao. The further afield he goes, the less likely is he to find it. The Sage, then, knows things without travelling, names things without having seen them, and performs everything without action."—LAOTSZE.

CHAPTER II

TAOIST SUBJECTS IN ART

LAOTSZE, the honoured founder of the Taoist religion in China, would meet with the surprise of his several lives were he to enter a Taoist shrine today.

One can imagine the dismay of this wise old man on finding it filled with gods and magicians of every complexion and variety. On reaching the very heart of the temple he would make the most uncomfortable discovery of all—that he himself had become the god-in-chief! Owing to his rare little way of living according to his own teachings, he would bear no resentment toward Huang Ti, the self-styled "First Emperor" (B.C. 249) to whom is ascribed a half-interest in the

founding of the Taoist religion. It was this man who is said to have thought out the witchcraft and other crowd-gathering elements which have given Taoism its long grip over the lower class Chinese. Moreover, it was he who constructed the Great Wall and the very name of China itself is supposed to come from his—the Chin Dynasty. He was reputed to be the first alchemist, and for his distinguished services in this direction was moved into the heavenly House of Lords, where he now sniffs an occasional pot of incense, as he sits in gaudy robes and wooden silence.

It was the good Laotsze, who, in the sixth century B.C., anticipated Bergson's *Creative Evolution* by teaching that the universe comes from an all-holding and impersonal principle which is self-existent and self-developing.

His eager followers were not content

to let the matter rest there, but among other things surrounded the jewel of his philosophy with the Eight Immortals, a complete paradise and a deified "Secretary of Agriculture." They have made longevity the thing, as well as life after death which comes to those who have sipped of the elixir of immortality. Kakuzu Okakura, the distinguished Japanese author, hints that this blessed elixir is nothing more or less than a cup of tea!

Laotsze himself (Pl. 10) as Shun-lao—the God of Long Life—occupies the foreground of many a plate. It is his wont to rest with his deer under a pine-tree, where he may be known from his fellows by his high forehead with its big bump of benevolence. There is usually a scroll, peach, or a ju-i sceptre near him, which may possibly be carried by an attendant. Three plums are one of his attributes and are considered an emblem of longevity.

It is possible that the early Britons may have connected this superstition to the twice-a-day damson, which—stewed—may be considered England's national fruit. The ju-i sceptre (Pl. 6) is also an emblem of long life, and its three-lobed head is a frequent motive in decoration (Pl. 6). It gets its form from the polyporus fungus which, like other mushrooms, is supposed to be a giver of immortality, especially when by some unfortunate accident these happen to belong to the toad-stool family.

The peach (Pl. 14) is the fruit of the sacred tree growing near the Lake of Gems in the west, and is watched over by the goddess Hsi Wang Wu. The tree is slow to bloom and performs the feat every three thousand years, after which the fruit takes another three thousand years to ripen!

Shun-lao is usually found at his celestial

abode—the Taoist Paradise—surrounded by the Eight Immortals (Pl. 11) and a few other friends, all of whom are enjoying a joke, or music, or argument, just as club-men do today in Piccadilly or on Fifth Avenue. The only real difference is that in the Taoist Paradise chess is played instead of bridge or poker. The paradise itself, often called the Hills of Longevity, is usually a pavilioned and rocky retreat, where a stream of Eau-de-Vie flows on forever—the Chinese symbol of perpetuity or eternity. Storks (Pl. 13) which turn black after having lived two thousand years, for which nobody will blame them, fly about carrying letters or divining rods which are an important part of Oriental religions.

The Eight Immortals usually armed with their symbols (Pl. 11 and Pl. 12) are either in the Paradise or crossing the waves in haste to reach it. Their attri-

butes alone often occur in embroidery, lacquer, or pottery amongst other designs. The following short accounts will at least serve as an introduction to these celestials:

Li Tieh Kwai with his crutch and gourd (Pl. 12)—one of the most prominent of this little band—soon becomes a familiar friend to the student of Chinese art. He was the pupil of Laotsze and used to go into trances during which he visited his master in the heavenly spheres. On one occasion he left his empty body to the care of a disciple, who, however, was called away from his charge for a fatal moment. When the soul of Li returned, his earthly self had been taken by another spirit, and he thereupon took possession of a beggar's body which had just been vacated. For the rest of his life he used the beggar's crutch and cane. A pilgrim's gourd is his emblem—sometimes shown with vapour escaping from its

mouth to symbolize his mystic voyages. A fourteenth century painting by Yen Hui shows Li with gourd and crutch and his other self issuing from his mouth.

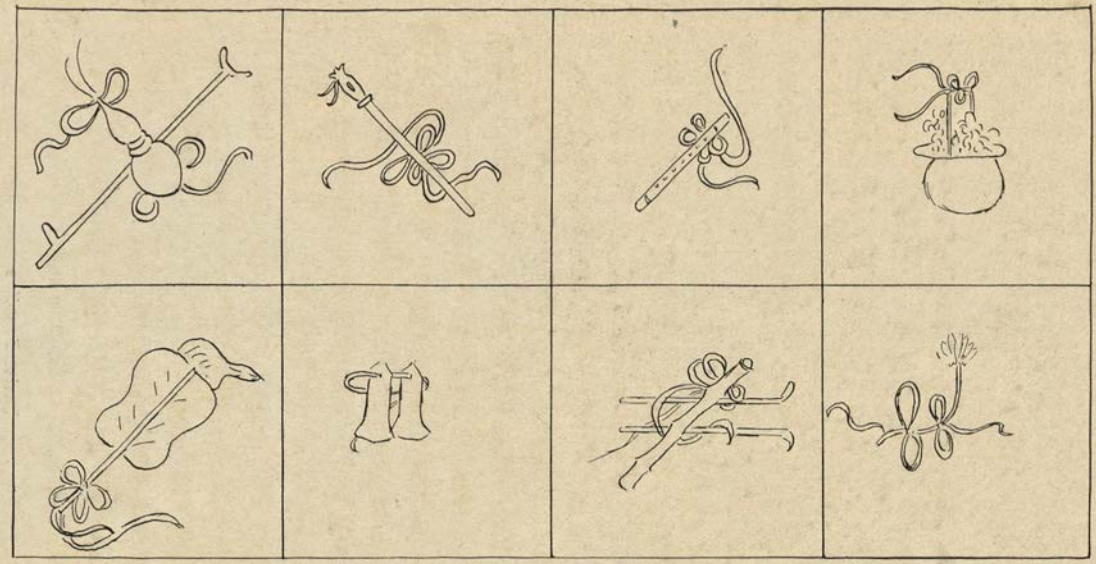
Chung Li Ch'uan, of the Chow Dynasty, is represented as a fat man, badly in need of a coat or vest, who carries a fan (Pl. 12) with which to bring the dead to life. There is a story that he once came upon a young woman who knelt beside a new-made grave, fanning it. He stopped to ask her what she was doing, and she told him she was to marry again but not until the grave of her first husband was dry. Then she fell to her fanning with great vigour. Chung Li who was not without his sense of humour—or his fan—volunteered assistance. So great was his magic power that the husband who had been quite dead indeed a few moments before, came to life again!

Lu Tung Pin's virtue in resisting ten

major temptations was rewarded by a marvellous sword (Pl. 12) with which he performed good deeds for four hundred years. He is represented carrying the sword across his back, and a fly brush in his hand. Hobson states that he is the patron saint of barbers, but it does not seem probable that the personage chosen as patron saint of such an up-to-date guild would use the same weapon for four hundred years.

Tsao Kuo Ch'io was the brother of the Empress Tsaou How. For this reason he wears court head-dress. He carried his emblem, a pair of castanets (Pl. 12), in his hand, and is the patron saint of actors.

Han Hsiang Tzu was a pupil of Lu Tung Pin who carried him to the sacred peach-tree. Han most unfortunately fell from its branches and, as might be expected, thereupon entered into a state of immortality. His emblem is the flute



Symbols of Eight Taoist Immortals

Crutch and gourd [Hu-lu] Sword [Chien] Flute [Hsiang-ti] Flower basket [Hua Pan]

Fan [Shan] Castanets [Pan] Tabor, bamboo tubes [Yu Ku] Lotus seed-pod

Taoist Paradise

(Pl. 12), which he used to play, and he is therefore the patron of musicians.

Chang Kuo Lao (eighth century) was a magician with a good knowledge of pocket magic. His vehicle of locomotion was a white mule with splendid lasting powers, which he folded up and carried in his pocket when not in use. His emblem is the tabor, two bamboo tubes (Pl. 12) with rods to beat them, which are sometimes placed in the instrument. He is the patron of artists.

Lan Tsai Ho may be a man or a woman. As a female she is represented carrying a flower basket (Pl. 12) Mayers states that she wandered abroad clad in a tattered blue gown, one foot shoeless, the other shod, sleeping on the ice and snow and begging her way. No doubt on account of the basket she became the patron of gardeners.

Ho Hsien Ku was a woman who lived

on powdered mother of pearl with the hope of attaining immortality. Once when sent for by the Empress Wu (A.D. 690–705), she disappeared and joined the Immortals. The mother of pearl had done its work. Her emblem is the leaf or seed pod of the lotus flower (Pl. 12).

Near the sacred peach-tree, or floating among clouds on the back of a phœnix, may be found the goddess Hsi Wang Mu, whom fable says lived on Mount Kwen Lun with her attendant genii, and her messengers—the two winged birds. She wears gorgeous robes and often has two attendants with her who carry a long-handled fan and basket of peaches, or possibly a spray of peach blossoms and a sacred fungus. She is called the "Royal Mother of the West" and the story of the Emperor Mu Wang (B.C. 985), whom according to the book of Chow used to visit her in his eight-horsed chariot,

suggests the more recent stories of Apollo and his steeds. The eight horses of Mu Wang are often seen on plates and vases.

Tung Wang Kung, the Royal King of the East, is the consort of Hsi Wang Mu, and is shown as a winged figure seated in the clouds. Anderson tells the following story in connection with this god:

"In the period of Yuan Yu (1086–1094) there lived an old man in the capital of China who foretold the future. He was only three feet high and of this measure his head formed the moiety. With the proceeds of his prophecies, he used to buy wine, and when drunk, would say: 'I am a sage and can bestow the gift of long life.' When summoned before the Emperor, and asked his age he suddenly vanished after telling stories of the long distant past. The next morning, it was announced that the light of the South Pole Star had, on the previous evening,

touched the Imperial Palace. The Emperor knew that the old man was the incarnation of the Star of Longevity."

He is supposed to have been the first practical demonstration of the generative power of the Tae-Keih, and is usually shown with two attendants, one carrying a peach and the other a staff from which hang two scrolls.

Tung Fang So occasionally appears carrying his plunder of three peaches, which Hsi Wang Mu planned to take as a present to her favourite the Emperor Wu Ti of the Han Dynasty. This trifling peculation did not prevent Tung from enjoying three thousand years of life, and a glimpse of paradise which would not have fallen to his share had he been less enterprising.

To add to the jollity of the hills, filled with the ever-young, there are the Twin Genii of Mirth and Harmony (Pl. 13)

One of these carries a lotus or palm leaf, with which to fan off troubles, and the other a scroll or round box which undoubtedly contains that life-saving elixir, Sense of Humour. Near this group are the Three Aged Ones (Pl. 13), who from their hale and hearty appearance have evidently kept themselves in trim with Yogi breathing and physical exercises. They usually stand together, one holding a staff, one a ju-i sceptre, and the other unrolling a scroll on which is depicted the Tae-Keih. One may discover also the Three Star Gods of Happiness, Rank, and Long Life. The first of these, Shou Hsing, bears a peach and a scroll attached to a long staff; Lu Hsing is dressed in official robes and winged hat, and carries a ju-i sceptre; Fu Hsing has a child on his back who is reaching for the peach of long life held by him.

In contrast to the carefully planned,

rubber-footed ambitions, suggested by the Three Star Gods, stands the frightful Kuan Ti, celestial "Secretary of War." He is the deification of Kuan Yu, a follower of the Han Dynasty in the second century A.D. In 1594, when everyone thought he was dead enough to be safe, he was elevated to his present office, which he still holds to this day. He is represented as a bearded man, making a face like a public speaker. Sometimes he is in armour with hand uplifted, holding a sword. Occasionally he rough-rides on a dragon.

Another rather forbidding looking person who should have no place in paradise, is Kcuei Hsing, with demon-face and horns. He looks to be one form of a certain person, mentioned in the Bible, who is also noted for his horns, but Kcuei's functions are fortunately more limited. Kcuei carries a large writing brush in

one hand and a fancy cap in the other, such as is said to have been worn by Chinese college graduates. He performs with ease the delicate act of standing on one foot on the head of a large fish, which is shooting through the waves with great speed. An image of him is placed directly in front of Wen Kung, God of Literature, no doubt as a little warning of what literary people have to look forward to. The two gods are sometimes mistaken for each other. Gulland, being an author as well as a connoisseur of Chinese art, is careful to state that though Kcuei Hsing's image stands in front of Wen Kung, he is in no way "regarded as his assistant."

Liu Hai is another Taoist favourite who for some unaccountable reason seems to have picked the lock of heaven. He often holds a besom or broom made of brushwood, and is either shown carry-

ing his three-legged toad (Pl. 8 and Pl. 13) or waiting for it to swim toward him. An old Chinese painting shows the swimmer making his start, and when the picture was seen by the author, the patient Liu Hai had been waiting on the shore for more than three hundred years! Under these circumstances it would have been no more than kind of the gods to have given that toad another leg.

The Rishi often play about in paradise. They are Taoist sages who sometimes appear in art in the guise of small, bad boys. They were denizens of the mountains who in their simple and quiet surroundings had discovered the secret of eternal youth.

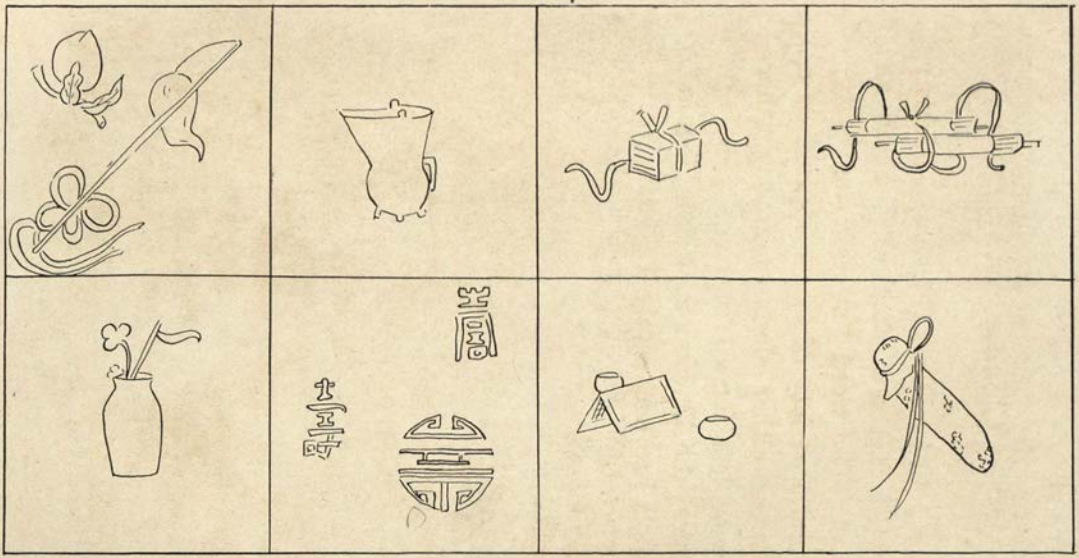
A frequent subject of statuettes is Wang Chi, the original Rip Van Winkle, who stands under trees watching a game of chess. As the story goes, he was picking up firewood one day and wandered into

a cave where two old men were playing chess. They passed the refreshments to him, and whether it was that or the excitement of the game will never be known, but when the long-suffering players finally suggested that it was time for him to go, Wang was surprised to find a little pipe of dust in the place of his axe-handle! Imagine his astonishment, not to speak of his anxiety on his way home!

Among the symbols of Taoism itself are the bronze mirrors, which are sometimes carried on the back of the sacred ox (Pl. 14) and the fly brush (Pl. 14) with its knob of horse-hair fastened a little distance from the staff. Buddhist fly brushes (Pl. 14) have the hair attached directly to the end of the handle. A vase (Pl. 14) containing such a weapon and the sacred fungus is the emblem of a Taoist or Buddhist scholar. The vase may also contain a scroll and a little brush or

duster. Ju-i sceptres (Pl. 6) and libation cups (Pl. 14) are often used alone as symbols. The word "show" (longevity) in infinite variety of forms appears as a decoration either alone or among other more or less formal patterns (Pl. 14). Neither the libation cups nor "show" symbols are exclusively Taoist.

Plate 14



Symbols of Culture and Honor

Four Elegant Accomplishments

Peach, Fly brush [Taoist] | Libation cups | Reading | Painting

Vase, Fly brush, Jue sceptre | Symbols of longevity [Shou] | Chess | Music

A Paragon of Filial Piety

Collection of Sir A. W. Franks, K.C.B.

III

Confucianism and Scholarly Attributes

"I do not expound my teaching to any who are not eager to learn; I do not help out anyone who is not anxious to explain himself; if after being shown one corner of a subject a man cannot go on to discover the other three, I do not repeat the lesson."—CONFUCIUS.

CHAPTER III

CONFUCIANISM AND SCHOLARLY ATTRIBUTES

THERE is comparatively little trace among Chinese art subjects of the philosophy founded by Confucius in the sixth century B.C., which has had such a tremendous influence for good on the civilization of his country. The reason is that Confucianism as such is in itself so abstract, so purely a theory of the conduct of life, that it cannot easily be embodied in any symbolic form. However, as Confucius himself was a great scholar, and as his teachings appealed to the learned and cultured classes in China, emblems of scholarship and articles of daily use in the study, employed as sym-

bols, are indirectly connected with this cult.

Confucius has been rightly called the "Teacher of Ten Thousand Ages." His doctrines, contained in the "Five Sacred Books" (Pl. 16), which were edited by him, are still a beacon light to all those who are not too buried in the "doing" to be interested in the "how-to-do." The first of these five—the *Yih King*—contains an exposition of the Tae-Keih which is the symbolic expression of the theory of changes. The *Shu King* treats of the corner-stones of good government, which—if the government is square enough to have four corners—may be classified under the heads of Goodness, Benevolence, Gravity, and Sincerity. The splendid translation of the third book—the *Shi King*—by James Legge, F.S.A., has brought to the Occident a collection of verses which may be read for their own

beauty as well as for the characterization of eminent statesmen and fragments of history with which they deal. The *Le King*, or *Book of Ceremony*, lacks the universality of appeal, which marks the three volumes already mentioned. It is, however, an interesting reminder of those fast-vanishing days when actions, like feet, were pounded into a mould and left there to "jell." The last of the Five Sacred Books is the *Chun-tseu*; a record of events, which is notable as being the only one of the lot written entirely by Confucius himself. These books are said to owe their origin indirectly to certain ancient records which were inscribed on wooden tablets. Confucius gave these relics such serious study that he is said to have worn out five copies of them (Pl. 16).

At the time of Confucius' birth, in 551 B.C., a fabulous animal of good omen,

called the kylin, is said to have appeared. It is represented with a stag's body, an ox's tail, and a unicorn's horn in the middle of its forehead. For it was so very, very good that in walking about, it left no footprints for fear of crushing some living thing. It is looked upon as the incarnation of the five elements.

In art, Confucius appears with a beard, wearing a literary man's cap, which is round in front—conforming to the shape of the skull, with the rear half higher and square (Pl. 16). He may carry a ju-i sceptre or the more usual scroll and brush pen. Sometimes he is one of three figures standing at a well. The other two are Laotsze and Buddha, and their presence there stands for the broad-minded conception that the three religions originate from the same source. Okakura quotes the Sung version of the same story in which Laotsze, Buddha, and Confucius

stand around a jar of vinegar. Each dips in an inquiring finger and answers according to his nature. Laotsze, the adaptable, calls it sweet; Buddha, the reflective says it is bitter; while Confucius, the man of the world, who cultivates the knack of hitting the nail on the head, speaks his mind and pronounces the vinegar sour! These Three Friends, the originators of the three great religions of China, are symbolized in art by the plum, bamboo, and pine when used together.

It is natural in a philosophy which deals largely with the proper conduct of life and devotion to parents, that the Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety should be almost the only objects of representation. These stories have been made accessible to us by Mayers in his valuable *Chinese Readers' Manual*, and are an interesting parallel in some ways to Sunday-school literature of our own

day. They also throw a searchlight, not only on the paragons, but also on the paragons' parents.

In this connection may be mentioned Kiang-She, whose aged mother developed a keen fancy for fish, as the river was several miles away. So each day Kiang and his wife took the walk and brought back the fish. As a reward to this persevering pair a spring made its appearance near their house in which was one portion of fresh carp each day. Kiang and his wife fortunately liked rice.

Kwoh Kü in his journey from birth to death also met with an interesting if difficult situation. Provisions were low and prices high and the family large and hungry. There was not enough for all, and Kwoh could not bear to see his mother starving. So he proposed to his wife that they bury one of their children in order to give the mother its share. No

objection was made by any of the parties concerned, who were old enough to know what was going on. Kwoh got out his shovel and began to dig. Suddenly he struck something hard and pulled up—a bar of gold! On it was engraved: "A gift from Heaven to Kwoh Kü; let none deprive him of it." History does not record the name of the engraver, but each person is entitled to one guess.

Lao-Lai-Tsze in his old age found that his parents were losing interest in things generally. So to amuse them and create the illusion that they were once more in their youth, he dressed himself in boy's clothes and danced and played before them. A Chinese bedstead, now in the Bethnal Green Museum, London, has this scene on one of its panels, done in inlay.

Telepathy seems to have been known as early as 516 B.C., for Tseng Shen and

his mother had such great sympathy existing between them that when she bit her own finger, he also felt the pain, even though distant from her, and he went to her immediately, knowing that he was wanted.

Hwang Hiang is noted for his devotion to his father. Hwang's mother had died not long after his birth, and he gave up the rest of his life to waiting on his father, with especial reference to keeping his bed warm in winter and cool in summer.

In order to be a paragon, it was evidently necessary for the candidate to do the impossible if requested. Meng Tsung is an example in kind. It was midwinter and his mother desired bamboo-shoots. As this was before the day of the green-house, Meng went despairingly into the grove, looking, but there were no shoots to be found. He then bewailed his inability to get them in a way that evi-

dently touched some supernatural heart, for all of a sudden, even though the thermometer was low, bamboo shoots began to shoot and shoot all around him, rivalling their normal growth of an inch a day in spring.

The stepmother steps in, in the case of Min Sun. She had several children of her own, and after making their garments, did not even leave a remnant for Min. She did the next best thing however, and made him up a suit in the prehistoric style, from leaves. Min's father loved him, and the sight of one arboreal costume in the midst of lovely silk ones was too much for his temper. He stormed about and threatened to get a divorce. But at this juncture, when the nerves of the whole family were on edge, Min entered and moved, like Burnham Wood, to the centre of the stage: "Nay, father, do not so, for it is better that one son

should suffer from cold than three children should be motherless." It is pleasant to relate that everything was patched up by this tactful stroke and that henceforth Min, perfectly garbed, sat at the stepmother's right hand.

A novel sort of devotion was shown by Wu Meng, a great magician, whose best trick in later life was to cross streams at will by a wave of his fan. As a boy it was his custom to let himself be bitten by mosquitoes, thus monopolizing their attention while his parents slept. As he lived long enough to make quite a name for himself, it is safe to assume that the mosquitoes which hovered about him were neither anopheles nor stegomyia.

The next paragon was an Emperor of China, Weng Ti, who took the throne in 179 B.C. His mother was ill for three years, and during all that time Weng

neither left her bedside nor changed his clothes!

Chu Show Ch'ang was an official of the Sung Dynasty, whose story would touch any heart, however galvanized. His mother had been put aside by his father during Chu's early boyhood. As a loyal and true son he never rested until he had found her, after a tireless search lasting fifty years.

A great deal of stress is laid by the Chinese on the proper burial of the dead. Tung Yung, one of the paragons, mortgaged himself for 10,000 copper-cash in order to pay the funeral expense of his beloved father. After the ceremony, as he was returning to his home, he was accosted by a woman who offered him herself as wife and three hundred rolls of silk, the value of which covered his personal mortgage. He did not refuse this opportune aid, but one month later his wife

disappeared, leaving behind her the customary note. From it Tung learned that she was a star sent by heaven to reward him for his unselfish devotion. As she left the three hundred rolls of silk behind, we are forced to believe the story.

Wang Siang may be mentioned as an historical example of the good stepson. It was bitter winter when he was put to test, and on the snowiest and iciest day of all, the stepmother asked for fish. No doubt Wang said, "Isn't that like a woman?" under his breath, but the fact remains that he walked out of the house and down to the river. There, with magnificent disregard of consequences, he stretched himself on the ice. The historian does not tell us exactly what happened, but later in the day he went back to his home, somewhat chilly perhaps, but bearing in his hand a fine pair of carp.

One of the earliest ancestors of the raw fruit diet was Tsai Shun, whose dietetic courage won him his place among the paragons. During a famine he collected berries, giving all the ripe ones to his mother, and eating all the green ones himself. Soon somebody died, but it was not Tsai, greatly to our surprise. Though the house was in flames he refused to leave his mother's bier. As she had been very much afraid of thunder during her lifetime, he used to go to her grave whenever there was a storm. There he would call aloud: "Be not afraid, mother, I am here." His memory is very much revered by the Chinese, and statuettes of him are frequently found.

Another popular subject for statuettes is Kiang Keh (Pl. 15), who is shown carrying a woman on his back. He is included among the Twenty-four Examples, because as a boy he rescued his mother

from robbers, and in order to save her from them carried her for miles on his shoulders.

Today, Ting Lan, Paragon, would be noted less for himself than as the husband of a clever wife. In accordance with the custom, an effigy of Ting's deceased mother was kept in his house as the object of his respect and devotion. One day when Ting was out, a friend, by way of being neighbourly, stepped in to borrow something. As the wife wished to shift the responsibility of a refusal, she got out the divining sticks and by this means asked the effigy if it wanted to lend the required article. It did not. Then the angry neighbour struck the image that was denying him the article needed, and departed, feeling more satisfied. On Ting's return he heard what had happened and went around to the neighbour's house at once, walking rapidly. History

does not state exactly what took place, but it is doubtful from published accounts, if the neighbour ever tried to borrow anything more from Ting's wife's mother-in-law's effigy.

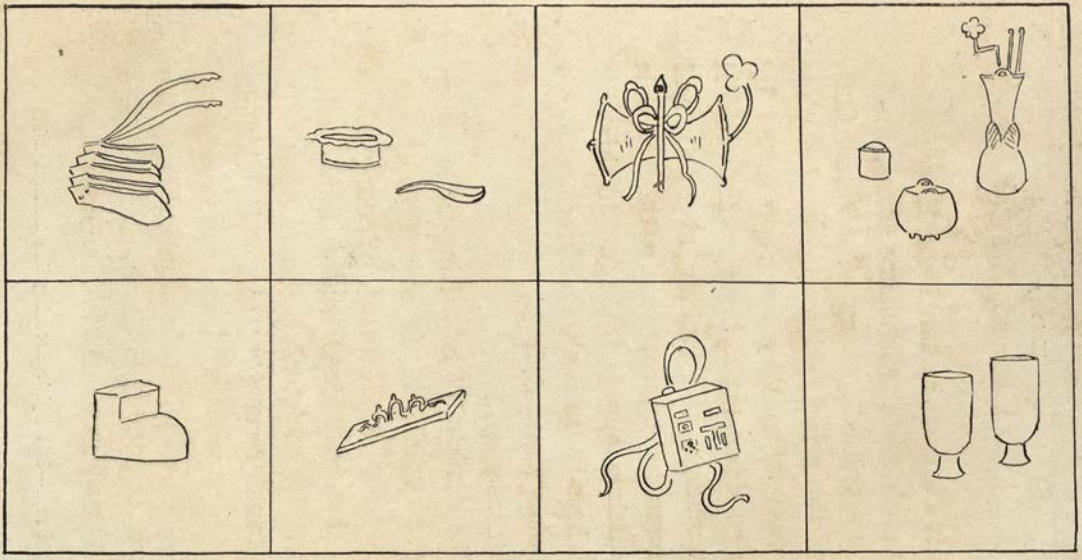
The remaining examples of Filial Piety are not distinctive enough to find their way into the field of art except on rare occasions, if at all. Yu Kien Low (500 A.D.), a prominent official, Hwang Ting Kien (1075–1105 A.D.), a famous poet of high rank, and Chung Yeo (180 B.C.), a disciple of Confucius, are included in the list for some act of piety to their parents. Wang Ngai is remembered as having screened his mother's grave from storms, while Luk Su (first century A.D.), was a political prisoner whose devotion to his mother earned him his freedom.

As the tendency of Confucian teachings was largely cultural it seems suitable to mention in this connection a popular art

motive known as the Four Elegant Accomplishments, which are chess, music, poetry, and calligraphy. Sometimes these form the principal decoration of a plate or vase when they are represented by groups of people playing chess and musical instruments, and looking at books and pictures. Frequently only the symbols themselves appear (Pl. 14). In this case the chess-board is always shown with two globular vases near by which contains the chess-men.

The fittings of a writing-table, when used as symbols, are meant to suggest scholarship or learning. Among these may be mentioned water bowls with spoons for moistening the ink-cake (Pl. 16), brush-rests (Pl. 16), and ink-slabs (Pl. 16) of various kinds with or without brushes. When a cake of ink, shaped like an axe, is combined in the same design with a brush-pen and a ju-i sceptre (Pl. 16),

Plate 16



Cultural Symbols

Five Wooden Tablets

Water-bowl and spoon

Ink-cake, brush pen and jui sceptre

Incense burning set

Cap of literary man

Brush rest

Seal

Sacrificial wine cups

Bodhidharma—His Spirit Crossing the Sea on a Reed

their three Chinese names form a synonym for "may things happen as you desire." The Four Treasures of the Writing-Table have attained the dignity of being a special motive. The treasures usually selected for this are the ink-cake, paper, brush-pen, and a slab of stone, wood, or other material on which the ink is dissolved in sufficient quantity for use. Seals sometimes appear showing either in profile or from the bottom (Pl. 16). The imperial seal was of jade with a dragon for a handle.

Among other things appropriate to the scholar were incense burning and music. A special incense-burning set (Pl. 16) is of frequent appearance and consists of a burner, a small box for the incense, and a vase which holds a tiny shovel of fanciful shape, and two metal rods with which to handle the hot ash. This is called the Set of Three. Another

group in which the incense burner plays a prominent part is the Set of Five, which also includes a pair of candlesticks and two flower vases all made in correct proportion. The incense burner in this instance usually has a perforated top and the set is destined for use in temples devoted not only to Confucian worship but to other religions as well.

The pair of sacrificial wine cups shown on Pl. 16 are connected with the Confucian religion. Music played no small part in the lives of cultivated Chinese, and in ancient times string instruments were the symbol of joy, while wind instruments denoted sorrow. The lute (Pl. 18), a long coffin-shaped affair, which resembles the Japanese koto, is frequently shown on pottery, wrapped in a brocaded covering or bag. The biwa (Pl. 18) is of frequent appearance, also a small musical instrument (Pl. 18) which appears in a

vase among emblems of scholarship. Other subjects belonging to the realm of the scholar are the box for dominoes (Pl. 18) and the famous round glass, amber or stone bottles with flat sides (Pl. 18), used to contain snuff!

IV

Buddhist and Non-Religious Art Motives

"Well-makers lead the water whither they will; fletchers bend the arrow; wise people fashion themselves. Having listened to the law they become serene, like a deep, smooth, and still lake."—SAKYAMUNI.

CHAPTER IV

BUDDHIST AND NON-RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS IN ART

ALTHOUGH Buddhism has been known in China at least as far back as 217 B. C., and although sacred pictures and scriptures of that Faith were brought into China during the Han Dynasty, as well as on later occasions, it was not until 520 A.D., when Bodhidharma arrived from India, that the Art of the Empire was in any great degree influenced by Buddhist motives, which had hitherto been unknown.

New divinities immediately took on Chinese characteristics without losing a distinctive Aryan look, which was in striking contrast to the coarse features of

the gods who had their origin in China. Large ear-lobes, the symbol of wisdom, are a feature of Buddhist deities that are clad in flowing garments which add a new element of grace wherever they appear.

Bodhidharma, an Indian prince, arrived in Honan province in 520 A.D. He settled in Loyang, an ancient capital, and died there after a life of contemplation. He is often represented in all forms of Chinese art as a man with a short beard and earnest, characterful face. The intensity of his glance is remarkable and is a striking element in all his pictures or statuettes. He frequently carries the patra or Buddhist alms bowl, and is often shown on his pathetic spirit-journey back to his homeland, when he crossed the sea standing on a reed (Pl. 17). Statuettes sometimes show him with a sandal near him or in his hand, dropped from the

foot that had withered away during his long period of contemplation. This habit of absorbing thought earned him the title of the Sage Who Looks at the Wall.

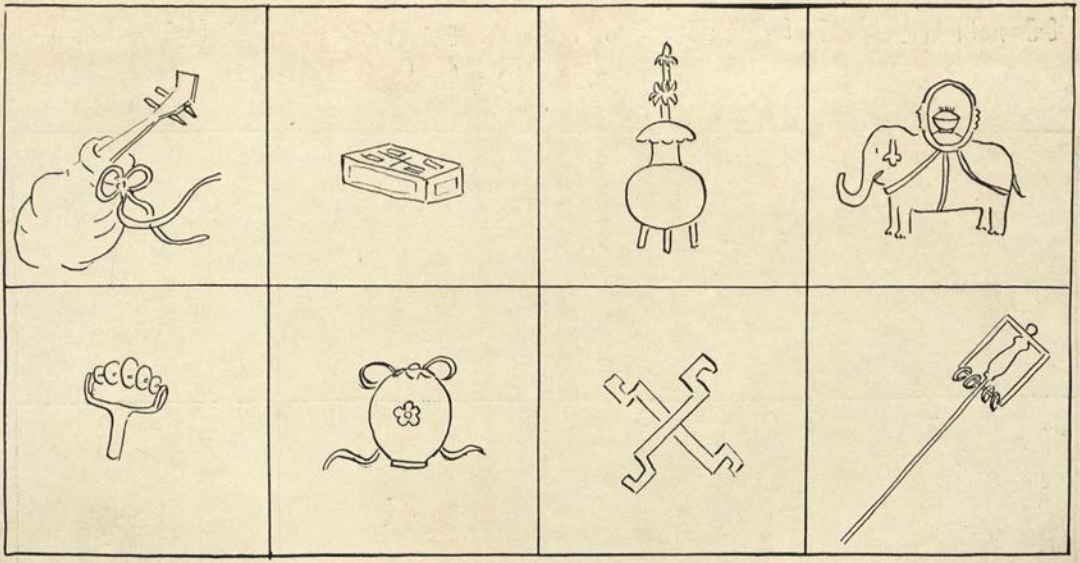
An epitome of Buddhism is given in graphic form by the vase (Pl. 18). This is probably a form of the alms bowl, and appears as a symbol, itself symbolizing the important points of the Buddhist religion.

The vase is divided into four conspicuous divisions, which stand for the Four Noble Truths:—(1) Suffering exists from birth to old age; (2) The origin of suffering is desire; (3) Emancipation from suffering comes by the cessation of desire; (4) Freedom from suffering is attained by virtuous living.

The three legs upon which the vase stands symbolize the Three Evidences of True Religion, which are: Hear no evil; See no evil; Speak no evil. The cover

with its ten scallops, of which five only are shown, indicate what is called Avoiding the Ten Evils—precepts which are very similar to the Ten Commandments of the Christian religion.

The seven petals of the lotus flower, half-way up the stem, represent the Seven Jewels of the Law: (1) Purity as shown in deep meditation; (2) Calmness as evinced in the struggle against evil; (3) Comprehension manifested in the desire to become holy; (4) Complete happiness produced by moral strength; (5) Wisdom shown by the developing of spiritual faculties; (6) Perfection brought about by absolute wisdom; (7) Enlightenment evinced by righteousness. The five-petaled lotus which crowns the top of the stem is the emblem of the Five Attributes of Being: Matter, Sensation, Perception, Discrimination, and Consciousness. Was there ever a vase that told so much?



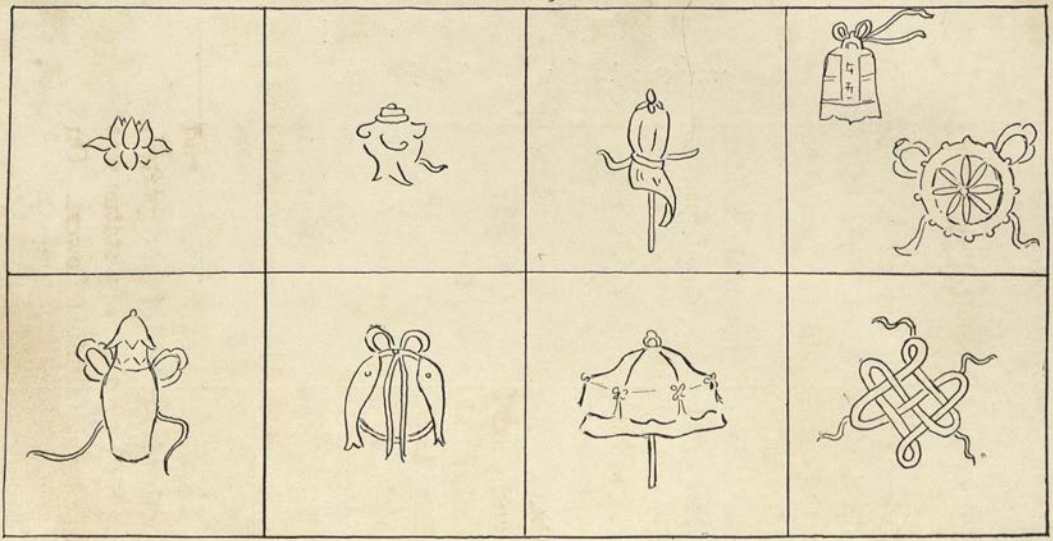
Occasional Confucian and Buddhist Symbols

Pi-wa
Musical instrument

Box for dominoes
Snuff bottle

Buddhist vase
Swastika

Sacred elephant
Priests' Standard



Buddhist Symbols [formal]

Lotus flower [Kiua] | Conch shell [Lo] | Official umbrella [Wan-mu-san] | Bell [Cheng]; Wheel of the law [Tun]

Covered vase [Ping] | Pair of fishes [Yu] | Canopy [Kai] | Knot [Chang]

The divine Buddha himself may be depicted in any one or all three of his phases, as the Sakyamuni, the Amitabha, or the Maitreya.

Sakyamuni is the personal Buddha, the actual man, who, by dint of resisting great temptations, passed through many transmigratory states before attaining Buddhahood. As a Boddhisattva, or next step but one from Buddha, he selected the pure and good Mayo of Kapilavastu as his mother-to-be. At the time of his painless birth, when he stepped from her right side, there were many remarkable occurrences, such as flashes of coloured light, and earthquakes which announced to the world the coming of the Buddha.

He left his work on earth to seek and save his mother in the land of the departed, and during his long absence a statue was made of him by his faithful followers. On

Sakyamuni's return from his quest the statue saluted him, and at that moment he uttered a prophecy which had its fulfilment after a campaign in Asia, when the monster statue was carried to the Court of China in 121 B.C. After his death, flame burst out of the swastika on his breast and consumed his body, which ordinary fire was unable to affect. Thus it is that the swastika (Pl. 18) which, to the Chinese, means "ten thousand ages" or "things," is also the symbol of the sacred heart of Buddha. He prophesied that the alms bowl, or patra, which he carried was to go through many adventures, and was finally to land at the bottom of the sea to await the Maitreya or coming Buddha. At that time it is to divide into four parts, each of which must be sacredly guarded, for with the disappearance of the alms bowl, Buddhism will perish from the earth.

Other symbols connected directly with Sakyamuni are: the jewel on his forehead which illumines every universe; the fig-tree—sacred because he meditated beneath it for a day and a night when he dreamed that he had become a Buddha; the thirty-two mystic tracings on his skin; and the sixty-five emblems on the soles of his feet.

The Eight Buddhist Symbols (Pl. 19) speedily become familiar to a student of Chinese art from a motive selected from the sixty-five mentioned above. These usually appear decorated with fillets or ribbons as a token of their sanctity. They are:

1. Lotus flower, emblem of purity out of the unclean.
2. Covered vase, a sort of reliquary,
3. Conch shell, anciently carried by mariners as an omen for a safe journey.

4. Two fishes, emblem of domestic happiness and faithfulness.
5. Official umbrella, always an emblem of official authority in the East.
6. Canopy, symbol of sovereign rank because carried over rulers and viceroys on state occasions.
7. Bell, used in temple services to attract the attention of the gods, or possibly the crystal bell heard by mystics at the time of the death of a mortal; or wheel of the law, sometimes used instead of a bell—probably a symbol of the prayer-wheel—a sort of revolving bookcase, one revolution of which is equal to a reading of the sacred books contained in the case.
8. Knot, representing the intestines and therefore an emblem of longevity.

Bushell gives an excellent classification of the representations of Sakyamuni as follows:

"Birth—the infant stands erect on lotus thalamus, pointing upward with the right hand and downward with the left.

"Sakyamuni returning from the mountains—he is ascetic in aspect, with a beard and shaven poll, flowing garments, and hands in a position of prayer. His brow bears the 'Urna' or luminous mark which distinguishes a Buddha.

"All-wise Sakyamuni—seated cross-legged on a lotus-throne, left hand upon knee, right hand raised in mystic preaching pose. Hair generally represented as a blue mass, composed of short, close curls. The jewel is midway between the crown and forehead.

" A pair of mandarin ducks or a butterfly have the same significance.

"The Nirvana—a recumbent figure

lying on a raised bench, with head pillowed on a lotus.

"In the Sakyamuni Trinity, he is either erect or seated in an attitude of meditation, with an alms bowl in his hands, between his spiritual sons the Boddhisattvas and Samantabhadra—the three forming a mystic triad."

A frequent Buddhist art subject is known as the Seven Gems of the Universal Monarch. These are often to be found on the borders of cups or plates (Pl. 20). They are:

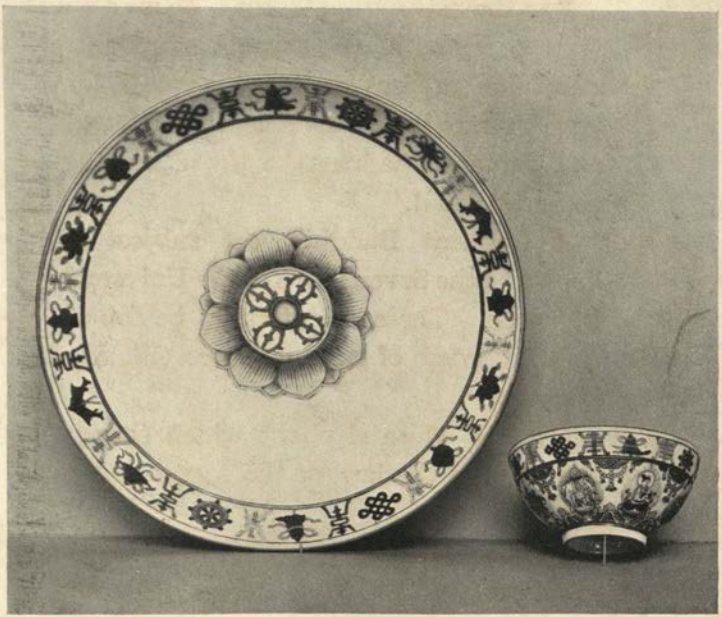
(1) The white elephant which carries the jewel of the law, or the sacred patra (Pl. 18).

(2) The bundle of jewelled rods which fulfill every wish. These are undoubtedly the divining rods used to this day in Oriental religions.

(3) The general.

(4) The divine guardian of the treasury.

Plate 20



Seven Gems of Universal Monarch

Plate 21

Ho-Shang, God of Contentment and Riches

Collection of Sir A. W. Franks, K.C.B.

(5) Lovely consorts.
(6) The horse.
(7) The golden wheel.

Amitabha Buddha is the heavenly counterpart of Sakyamuni, and is an impersonal deity representing boundless and eternal light. In an old painting of the Sung Dynasty, he is depicted as a beautiful luminous creature holding a water bowl and spoon, sitting at the head of living water which flows from the rocks beneath his feet, thus symbolizing "the origin of." In statues Amitabha usually wears a halo and stands on a lotus pedestal. Sometimes he holds a cord with which to rescue his followers.

Maitreya—the third form of Buddha—is yet to appear on earth, like the Messiah of Jewish tradition. Statuettes of Ho Shang are considered by many to be representations of the Maitreya, although they lack the dignity with

which one would expect to find this deity invested.

The sixteen arhats are the disciples nearest to Buddha, chosen from the five hundred who have freed themselves from the shackles of transmigration. When Ho Shang and Dharmatrata are included, the number is extended to eighteen. Jacquemart says that the legends connected with these men cannot antedate the eighth century. Their names as spelled here are so original and delightful that no commentator since their Occidental discoverer has had either the courage or the wish to bring the spelling into line with other Anglo-Saxon specimens of the Chinese language. As there are so many in this group, they rarely appear on pottery, but are usually to be found in carvings, paintings or large pieces of lacquer. They may be recognized by their attributes:

(1) Noh Chu Na sits on a bench with a rosary in his hand.

(2) Poh Sho-Lo is accompanied by a tiger.

(3) Pan Sho-Chia holds a pearl which a dragon is trying to reach.

(4) Chia Noh Chia Fa T'Sho carries a fly-brush and is seated in a chair.

(5) Poh Li Toh Sho carries a scroll, and has attendant with a gong.

(6) Su Pin Sho sits on a mat, his hands on his knees.

(7) Chia Li Chia stands on a rock, holding a scroll.

(8) Fa Sho Lo Fo Sho Lo is seated on a stool and carries a knotted staff.

(9) Shu Po Chia is sometimes accompanied by a lion. He sits before a lotus pedestal.

(10) Yin Chie Sho holds a ju-i sceptre,

an attendant carries his staff with fish on the end of it.

(11) O Sh'to holds a staff. A vase with peonies stands before him.

(12) Chu Shu Pan Sho Chia is seated on a mat bearing a fly-brush.

(13) La Hu La is seated before a lotus pedestal with his hands folded.

(14) Na Chie Si Na holds a patra from which flowing water ascends.

(15) Pin Tu Loh Poh To Sho stands on a rock with tablets and fly-brush.

(16) Fa Na Pho Tsy looks at a vase in which there is a peach branch without leaves.

(17) Dharmatrata is a lay devotee. He carries a vase and fly whisk, and a bundle of books on his back. His hair is long and he gazes intently at an image of Amitabha Buddha.

Ho Shang (Pl. 21) is known as the Bonze with the Hempen Bag. He carries a rosary and leans against a sack. He is looked upon as the God of Contentment or Riches, or as a representation of Maitreya Buddha. In life he is supposed to have been the Buddhist priest Putai whose last words were: "The God! The True God! He dwells in the hearts of billions of souls yet they know it not!"

Kuan-yin (Pl. 22) is a great favourite in the Buddhist pantheon, and may be male or female. The most usual and popular representation of this goddess is a beautiful and gracious woman, who holds a child in her arms and wears a rosary around her neck. She is the Chinese equivalent of India's Avalokita, and when represented in that form, she is shown with several heads and four, eighteen, or forty hands, with which she strives to alleviate the sufferings of the unhappy.

The Chinese Kuan-yin was said to have been the daughter of a king—Chang Wang of the Chow Dynasty (696 B.C.). He strenuously opposed her wish to become a nun, and was so irritated by her refusal to marry that he put her to humiliating tasks in the convent, no doubt that she might see the life for herself. This means of coercion failed, and her father then ordered her to be executed for disobedience to his wishes. But the executioner, who was evidently a man of tender heart and some forethought, probably brought it about that the sword which was to descend upon her should break into a thousand pieces. Her father was not balked by a little thing like that and ordered her to be stifled. As the story goes she forthwith went to Hell, but on her arrival the flames were quenched and flowers burst into bloom. Yama, the presiding officer, looked on in dismay at

what seemed to be the summary abolition of his post, and in order to keep his position he sent her back to life again. Carried in the fragrant heart of a lotus flower she went to the island of Potola near Ningpo. One day her father fell ill and according to a Chinese custom, not so rare as one might suppose, she cut the flesh from her arms that it might be made into medicine. A cure was effected, and in his gratitude her father ordered her statue to be made, "with completely-formed arms and eyes." Owing to a misunderstanding of the orders the sculptor carved the statue with many heads and many arms, and so it remains to this day.

Kuan-yin is the Goddess of Mercy, and whether seated on a rock near the water, or standing in majesty, a vase containing a spray of leaves is usually beside her. Sometimes two tiny children stand at her

feet praying. She is frequently accompanied by Manjusri, the God of Wisdom mounted on a lion, and Samantabhadra the All-good who rides an elephant and carries a ju-i sceptre. The elephant has therefore become the symbol of Boddhisattvas, the class of saints who have to pass through human life but once more before becoming Buddhas. The elephant is also the bearer of the jewel of the law or the sacred patra (Pl. 18).

The lion in Chinese art is usually moulded in a drippling smile, with a pair of cubs playing about its feet. It is properly a Buddhist emblem and stands at the gateway of temples to scare off evil spirits. It usually toys with a ball and looks so much like a stuffed puppy that it is often spoken of as a dog of Foh—or Buddha.

As it is considered wrong for a Buddhist to kill any living thing, many priests carry

Kuan-Yin, Goddess of Mercy

Collection of R. H. Benson, Esq.

Avalokita

Vase with Symbols (Reverse)

Collection of G. W. Salting, Esq.

a standard to which are attached jangling metal rings (Pl. 18). This is meant as a warning to pedestrian insects who are thus enabled to get out of the way. Another priestly weapon is the quadruple vajra sceptre (Pl. 20) which owing to its pleasing and symmetrical form sometimes appears as an art motive (Pl. 20). It represents the sceptre of Indra with which he used to rout the enemies of Buddhism in his character as "Church Militant." It is brandished during religious services in order to terrify evil spirits who may be in the vicinity. The fly-brush (Pl. 14) is used in a similar way by Buddhist priests, who are pestered, in order to break connection with any polluting influence.

A symbol of frequent appearance is a pair of rings linked together. There is a difference of opinion as to their significance, but they may represent the ear-

rings of an arhat, or symbolize the oneness of male and female. If there is but one ring, and that a thicker one, it may be a jade ornament which is worn with certain Buddhist priest robes.

A flower which connotes Buddhism is the finger citron, so called because the form taken by its petals resembles a classic position of Buddha's hand with the index and little finger pointing upward.

. . . . . .

Several well-known motives frequently appear in poetry, lacquer, or embroidery that are not of religious origin. For example the Virtuous Heroines occasionally make their appearance in public. They form the subject of a classic work by Liu Hiang, who lived during the Han Dynasty. There are also the Lovers of the Chrysanthemum or Lotus who are always shown in the vicinity of these lovely blossoms. The poet Li Tai-po

was a lover of the lotus flower as well as the wineskin, and was such a favourite at Court and so greatly beloved for a while, that the Emperor and his ministers used to wait on him until they finally got tired of it and quit. He is usually found in a semi-doze, with the wineskin or lotus flowers not far off.

There are of course an infinite number of scenes represented in all forms of Chinese art whose scope is co-extensive with the actual history of China itself. No mere man or woman could know them all. It is possible, however, for a normal brain, when properly informed, to make certain deductions about the people on his plate, her embroidered plaque, or their lacquered cabinet—which puts life into even the humblest piece. It is always easy, however, to guess from the generous sprinkling of symbols which characterizes Chinese art, whether the pictured

people are Taoist or Buddhist or Academic.

Old embroidered or brocade plaques taken from the breast or back of worn-out Chinese official robes are often purchased by travellers in the Far East. They are usually very artistic and become doubly interesting when their significance is known. Birds indicate the Civil Service, animals the Army and Navy. The decoration chosen for the weave as well as the girdle-clasp worn was an indication of rank as follows:

Grade:	*Military:*	*Civil Service:*	*Belt Buckles:*
1st	unicorn	pelican	jade set in rubies
2d	lion	golden hen	gold set in rubies
3d	panther	peacock	chased gold
4th	tiger	crane	chased gold with chased silver button
5th	bear	white pheasant	chased gold with plain silver button.

Grade:	*Military:*	*Civil Service:*	*Belt Buckles:*
6th	tiger	stork	mother of pearl
7th	rhinoceros	mandarin duck	silver
8th	seal	quail	translucent horn
9th	sea-horse	long-tailed jay	buffalo horn

V

Historical Outline

"In the mulberry tree still bides the dove
And now on thorn trees are her brood.
A virtuous man our Chief doth prove,
Of faultless rectitude;
And by such rectitude
Is all his land reformed, renewed."

Odes of Tsau.

CHAPTER V

HISTORICAL OUTLINE

A BOOK dealing with any phase of Chinese art would be incomplete without at least a sketching in of the rise and fall of the last four dynasties in which art has made such great strides.

The Sung Dynasty (960–1127 A.D.) has been generally recognized as the most fruitful period of Chinese history from the humanist standpoint. It was founded by T'ai Tsu whose birth was attended with celestial manifestations, which were said by his mother to be an omen of his future importance. As she happened to be an Empress, the populace was only too willing to believe her. Immediately after his accession he gave a splendid banquet

to which he invited those generals who might have become possible contestants for his throne. With the salad—when they were all in the best of humour—he suggested that their families should intermarry with his own. With the dessert he proposed that all those present should lay down their arms. From the success of his suggestions he may be looked on as one of the earliest historical exponents of the theory that the way to a man's heart lies through his stomach.

During this dynasty colleges were opened throughout the Empire where students who wished to pass the examinations had to be able to write a poetical composition, an essay on a famous historical character, and to have a thorough knowledge of history. This sounds easy enough compared to the Western requirements of today, which range from the astronomy of the Outer-most to the

psychology of the Inner-most. One should stop to consider, however, that the Chinese alphabet or syllabary contains a mere bagatelle of twenty thousand characters, and even were it treated with a rabid application of the pruning knife, the student would still find in his hands a large number of unavoidable ideographs.

Having mastered this primary work he would no doubt be promoted to history only to be dealt another deadly blow. For out of the myriad ages of China's national life the events of the Tang Dynasty (618–906 A.D.) alone occupy 225 volumes, while the poetical works of this same single epoch have been compressed into a dainty little *de luxe*, numbering nine hundred books in all.

So greatly reverenced was the cult of the scholar in the Sung period that in A.D. 979 the Emperor ennobled the past

descendants of Confucius for forty-five generations.

A series of misfortunes finally drove the Sung monarchs into the South, where they made their capital at Nanking. With the Mongolian invasion about 1276, the sun of the Sungs began to look to the entering hordes like a total eclipse.

The Yuan Dynasty (1280–1368 A.D.) was next instituted in China by the Mongol Kublai Khan with a capital at Peking. He was an ardent Buddhist and selected an impartial board to investigate the Taoist religion. They reported that Taoism was completely corrupt, with the exception of the Tao-teh-king by Laotsze. Whereupon Kublai ordered that all Taoist belongings should be burned. Wen Tien-Siang, the loyal Nogi of ancient China, had remained faithful to the Sungs, and as the refusal of allegiance by such a widely-known man undoubtedly

rankled in Kublai's autocratic heart, he was thrown into prison. A popular clamour soon arose in his behalf, and Kublai gave the magnificent old man a chance to deny the old masters and join with the new. However, Wen stated that he had no further desire to live and begged to be put to death. Kublai obligingly had this done, and fragments of his dress were treasured ever after by the devoted people. On his robe he had written a saying of Confucius:

"The scholar and the virtuous man will not desire to live at the expense of their virtue. They will on the contrary give up their lives to possess it."

There was also a saying from Mencius, the disciple of Confucius: "I am fond of fish and also of bear's paws. If I cannot get them both I will dispense with the fish and take the bear's paws. In a like manner I have a desire for life and I also

love righteousness. If I cannot retain them both I will sacrifice life and hold on to righteousness."

A successor of Kublai's was so much impressed by the teachings of Confucius that he had his writings translated into Mongol and—as a little hint—gave a copy of the book on Filial Piety to each of his immediate relatives.

It was not long before literature and the arts began to be neglected and the splendid school system to fall into decay. A tremendous secret society known as the "White Lily" monopolized public attention, ostensibly for the worship of Kuan-yin, but in reality for political motives. The leader declared that the goddess would give them aid and free them from the Mongols—if they were willing to do their share of the work. The large revolt which followed was the cause of the Yuan downfall.

The Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 A.D.) was next to come, with its capital at Nanking. T'ai Tsu, the first ruler, was a Carnegie in spirit and founded libraries throughout the Empire. With wise forethought he appointed a commission of men from the Han-lin Academy to get together a history of the Yuan Dynasty while the raw material was still at hand. Like his recent prototype he was a canny man, and built a gorgeous hall in Peking to contain statues of the twenty-one generals who had assisted him to power. He had a keen knowledge of human nature and the bait it nibbles on, and in that magnificent temple which sheltered statues of the people who had been useful to him, he saw to it that there were plenty of vacant niches for those yet to come! The Ming policy was a broad and generous one and in order to help along good government, a simplified code of laws was drawn up. Even the five hundred

eunuchs of the palace shared in the benefits by receiving an education which put power in their hands that they used to the ultimate destruction of the dynasty. They became so influential that nobles attached to the Emperor Wu Tsung protested against the influence of this debased class, and one day Wu found a note containing charges against some of his powerful friends. He was greatly incensed at this presumption and ordered three hundred mandarins to kneel in his court-yard until the writer of the note was made known. Be it said to their eternal honour that they remained there for five days and nights until the baffled Emperor had to order them home or to the hospital! Renewed results of the "White Lily" society began to weaken the dynasty, thus giving the ever-ready invaders an opportunity which they were not slow to grasp.

The Ts'ing Dynasty (1644–1911) was Manchu, with the ancient capital at Mukden. On assuming control of the country they removed to Peking, but many of their precious embroideries, paintings, books, pottery, bronzes, and jades remain in the Mukden treasure house, where they were seen by the author just before the revolution. The first action of the Manchus was to issue a decree depriving the eunuchs of their authority, which was published to the world on tablets weighing a thousand pounds. Kang-Hsi (A.D. 1662–1722) is esteemed as one of the best known of all Chinese Emperors. He had been so tolerant of Roman Catholics that there were 100,000 converts in three provinces alone before he knew it. He was finally prevailed upon to issue an edict against all missionaries remaining in the Empire except by his own special permission.

During his reign a great dictionary was compiled which is an authority to this day and the wise teachings of his Sacred Edict are supposed to be publicly read in every town on the 1st and 15th of each month. Moreover it was during his reign that several types of porcelain reached their highest development.

The Dowager-Empress Tse-hsi was one of the best-known rulers of this dynasty. She was born in 1835, and on the death of her son, the Emperor, perpetrated a *coup d'état*, putting his nephew, the baby Kuang Hsü, on the throne. A co-Empress-Dowager named Tse-an stood in the way of her ambition, but not for long, for the mortality rate among her enemies was noticeably high. The Emperor was continually assisted in governing by his loving aunt, and in 1898 he issued an edict saying that the Dowager Empress would receive the high officials

of the government in the Administrative Palace, while he, the Emperor, would attend to affairs of State in the Side Hall. The harassed man was not even allowed to find peace in death, for his aunt followed him to the Hills of Longevity by an interval of twenty-four hours. She was the biggest of the several bitter drops that finally made the bucket run over on October 11, 1911, when the Dynasty came to an end and a republic was declared.

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